

SCS HCS HB 344 -- AGRICULTURE

This bill establishes the Farm-to-Table Advisory Board and changes the laws regarding the Commodity Merchandising Council Program.

FARM-TO-TABLE ADVISORY BOARD (Section 262.950, RSMo)

The Farm-to-Table Advisory Board is established consisting of at least one representative from the University of Missouri-Extension Service; the departments of Agriculture, Corrections, Economic Development, and Elementary and Secondary Education; and the Office of Administration. The Director of the Department of Agriculture will appoint one person who is actively engaged in the practice of small agribusiness. The representative from the Department of Agriculture will serve as chair of the board and coordinate meetings. The board must hold at least two meetings but may hold more if necessary to fulfill its requirements.

The mission of the board is to provide recommendations for strategies that allow schools and state institutions to more easily incorporate locally grown agricultural products into their cafeteria offerings, salad bars, and vending machines and that increase public awareness of local agricultural practices and the role that local agriculture plays in sustaining healthy communities and supporting healthy lifestyles.

The board must:

- (1) Investigate the status and availability of local, state, federal, and any other resources that may be used to link schools and state institutions with local and regional farms for the purchase of locally grown products, to increase market opportunities for locally grown products, and to assist schools and other entities with education campaigns that teach children and the public about the concepts of food production and consumption, the value of an accessible supply of locally grown food, and the interrelationships between nutrition, food choices, obesity, and health;
- (2) Identify any type of barrier that prevents or hinders schools and state institutions from purchasing more locally grown products, the expansion of market opportunities for locally grown products, or schools and other entities from engaging in the educational campaigns;
- (3) Develop recommendations for the maximization of existing resources and the development of new or expanded resources that are necessary to accomplish its objectives and the elimination of

barriers that hinder these objectives; and

(4) Submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, and the director of each agency represented on the board by August 31, 2012.

COMMODITY MERCHANDISING COUNCIL PROGRAM (Section 275.360)

The bill adds a rice grower or producer to those exempt from the provision allowing an agricultural producer or grower to independently request a refund of the fees paid to the Commodity Merchandising Council Program from the Director of the Department of Agriculture.

The provisions regarding the Farm-to-Table Advisory Board will expire August 31, 2012.